The Art of Sitting
explorations & investigations
H. MATISSE 52
seated postures - why should we invest time and energy into inquiry?

To be sitting conjures up many visual and literary images of being: idle; inactive; indolent; sluggish; stationary; sedentary; even torpid, so why should we be bothered with a practice that is seemingly so static?
a bridge between standing and supine postures

Being seated forms an integral part of our yoga practice; a bridge between the perceived grace, movement and strength of the standing postures and the deeply relaxing supine and prone postures. The best of both can be discovered if we take the time and make an effort to inquire where the seated practice can take us.
letting gravity do the work

* Padamasana … the moment the weight of the body drops on the earth, the spine elongates and becomes straight

To sit easily with no discomfort or pain as we settle into a deep and comfortable position can be deeply satisfying.

Finding stillness in body and mind we can connect more deeply with the earth through the down, whilst also soaring with lightness radiating upwards in a supple, wave-like motion through the spine.
breathing is the essence of yoga

Breathe naturally … After a while, when the last three vertebrae closest to the ground start to receive life, if we are attentive, we will discover that the energy running along the back of the spine (from its base to the top of the head) increases in power, making the spine alive and strong.

We can breathe lying down in Savasana, but the best position is always Padmasana*, the cross-legged lotus pose.

Vanda Scaravelli, Awakening the Spine
increasing self-awareness

You cannot be who you are not. Simply rest, sit still and unknot. You may even try to emulate and inspire, But it's the inner self that you'll transpire.

Ana Claudia Antunes, Brazilian Author

Image: derived from an original work by Susan Adams
relaxing both body and mind

Daily sitting is our bread and butter, the basic stuff of dharma. Without it we tend to be confused.

Charlotte Joko Beck, Zen Teacher

Image: Sandra Clarke
exploring the breath

The ideal of calm exists in a sitting cat.

Jules Renard, French Dramatist

Image: derived from an original work by John Malone
bridging the space between standing & supine postures

When bored of sitting, move!
When bored of moving, sit!

Balance your life or there will remain neither moving nor sitting in your life but only falling!

Mehmet Murat ildan, Turkish Playwright & Author

Image: Georges Barbier
finding stillness when sitting

You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

Franz Kafka, Novelist

Image: derived from an original work by Nancy Merkle
finding lightness & freedom through the postures

The web of life is a beautiful and meaningless dance. The web of life is a process with a moving goal. The web of life is a perfectly finished work of art right where I am sitting now.

Robert Anton Wilson, Writer

Image: Edgar Degas
discovering the nuances in the postures

Sitting makes us think of standing
Our current stance keeps on demanding
We wish to fly without the wings
Puppets move before pulling the strings

Munia Khan, Author & Poet
exploring gravity and giving back to the earth

When was the last time you spent a quiet moment just doing nothing – just sitting and looking at the sea, or watching the wind blowing the tree limbs, or waves rippling on a pond, a flickering candle or children playing in the park?

Ralph Marston, American Writer

Image: Claude Monet
allowing time to listen and observe

What an elder sees sitting; the young can't see standing.

Gustave Flaubert, *French Novelist*

*Image: derived from an original work by Graham Dean*
working together in small groups

Any time women come together with a collective intention, it’s a powerful thing. Whether it’s sitting down making a quilt, in a kitchen preparing a meal, in a club reading the same book, or around the table playing cards, or planning a birthday party, when women come together with a collective intention, magic happens.

Phylicia Rashad, American Actress
exploring a wide variety of seated postures

There’s something about sitting alone in the dark that reminds you how big the world really is, and how far apart we all are. The stars look like they’re so close, you could reach out and touch them. But you can’t. Sometimes things look a lot closer than they are.

Kami Garcia, Author

Image: derived from an original work by Irmgard Schoendorf Welch